

The
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BULLETIN**

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JOHN DEWEY ON THOREAU . . .

In the last bulletin we started a new feature for our bulletin, comments of great moderns on Thoreau, with a letter from G. B. Shaw. We are happy to continue the series with a letter from an equally great non-egarian, Dr. John Dewey. We wrote Dr. Dewey:

I have often noticed how closely the educational philosophy of Henry David Thoreau as expressed in his books and letters and in the school which he ran for a short time in Concord coincides with your educational philosophy. Probably you already know of his letter to Orestes Brownson in which he says:

This discipline which we allow to be the end of life, should not be one thing in the school-room, and another in the street. We should seek to be fellow-students with the pupil, and we should learn of, as well as with him, if we would be most helpful to him.

We of the Thoreau Society would be most grateful to you if you could take the time to write a few sentences of your opinion of Thoreau. . . Dr. Dewey most graciously replied with:

JOHN DEWEY
1158 FIFTH AVENUE
NEW YORK 29

Nov 28 '49

Dear Mr. Harding

Please pardon the delay in replying to your interesting letter. I ought to be able to say that in the interval I have been reading Thoreau so that I could say that ~~xxxxxx~~ at least I had more firsthand knowledge than I had before I got your welcome letter. But alas, that could not be in accord with fact. My knowledge of Thoreau has always been penumbral and in spite of the fact that the penumbra was of the quality of a halo, it never induced me to go further. Maybe if some one has called my attention to the passage you cite from him about discipline my curiosity would have been more active. What holds of myself is true I imagine of many; they know indirectly enough about Walden of a general sort so they are not moved to go into actual contact. I am glad you have called my attention to the coincidence in educational views, and I am ashamed ~~xxxxxx~~ not to have been aware of it before, and not only made due acknowledgments but have buttressed myself with his authority. I am wondering why I have never gone to the source in his case: ^{been} was he presented with too much austerity- as a kind of The Last Puritan. I'm only asking.

Thanking you I am sincerely yours

John Dewey

THE THOREAU LIBRARY OF ALFRED W. HOSMER.

1949 has been a year of important events for the Thoreau student. One of the most important has been the gift of the Thoreau Library of Alfred W. Hosmer to the Concord Free Public Library by Herbert Buttrick Hosmer of Concord. The Hosmer collection of Thoreauiana is one of the largest and most significant ever assembled. It was gathered around the turn of the century by "Fred" Hosmer, uncle of H.B. Hosmer. There is no better portrait of Fred than that in a letter from his old friend Dr. Samuel A. Jones to H.S. Salt of June 27, 1897:

And you want to know about "Fred." There is only one "Fred," and I do most certainly mean "A.W.H." when I write "Fred."

Sir Humphrey Davy was once asked which he considered his greatest discovery, and he promptly answered: "Michael Faraday." Well, when I went to Concord in 1890 my richest "find" was Fred Hosmer: so called from cutting the Alfred W. in two. He is but distantly related to the Edmund Hosmer of some renown as "the long-headed farmer" mentioned by Emerson and sneeringly referred to by Hawthorne's son in his Life of his father and mother. "Fred" carries in his heart some of the best blood that any "Mayflower" can ever carry from dear old England anywhere. His father was a carpenter, and a sturdy representative of all that can make Concord attractive to him who doesn't admire the frills more than the frock. (A distinction which too many of Emerson's "admirers" fail to make.)



Fred is about thirty-five years of age; a bachelor; a salesman in a little variety shop in Concord; an amateur photographer, and better informed about Thoreau's haunts than any man living or dead. W. E. Channing not excepted. Fred is also a botanist; an early riser; a member of that high caste erstwhile known as the "Sunday Walkers"--an unregenerate set who firmly believe

"The groves were God's first temples".

Fred Hosmer makes his own clothes, and this from a desire to be independent of "sweating shops". But the night would fail me to tell you all about him. What do I say! All about

him! God forgive me! when a pint cup can comprehend a gallon, I shall know "all about" a nature so infinitely superior to my own.

I am struck by the depth of your insight as shown in what you have written about "Fred" as contrasted with those polite personages who once "knew Thoreau" but are now living in such a different sphere. Those are your own words, and you have struck the nail right on the head.

I, poor miserable I, admire Thoreau; Fred lives him! Don't despise me now; I despise myself when I think of Fred and remember myself. That's punishment enough, for the Nemesis is neither myth, nor dead; no, not even sleeping. You can afford to come to America if only to look for a moment into Fred's clear grey eyes-- after that, a tramp through "Thoreau's country" with him for guide is enough to make one's memory radiant forever.

Fred is not "literate", as Lamb's friend said of the servant girl with whom a Christ Church scholar elected to walk through life; but Fred shames all the "Humanities" that are known to any scholastic cloister. O, Mr. Salt, when God Almighty sets out to make a MAN, He always makes a success of it; Fred is the divine Q.E.D. of that proposition.

This magnificent gift to the Concord Free Public Library has been appropriately commemorated with the issuing of a catalog of the collection, THE THOREAU LIBRARY OF ALFRED W. HOSMER GIVEN TO THE CONCORD FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY BY HERBERT BUTTRICK HOSMER. (Concord, September, 1949, 24pp., mimeographed), which was compiled by Mrs. Herbert Hosmer. Copies may be obtained by sending ten cents to cover the cost of mailing to the Concord Free Public Library, Concord, Mass. The catalog will be an invaluable aid to scholars who wish to know the location of some of the rarer pieces of Thoreauviana, and the commentary indicates the extent to which Alfred Hosmer helped the Thoreau scholars of his day.

Two items in the collection are of particular interest. The first is the specially enlarged edition of Salt's life of Thoreau which contains seventy-four autographs, manuscripts, photographs, and original letters by or pertaining directly to Thoreau (The MSS are itemized on p. 24 of the catalog.). The second is a two-volume scrap book of reviews, criticisms, and essays on Thoreau, covering the period from 1840 to 1903. Many of these are extremely rare, probably even unique, and the collection as a whole offers the student an unparalleled opportunity to study the 19th century criticism of Thoreau.

Special mention must also be made of the fine collection of letters to Alfred Hosmer from Thoreau students all over the world. Probably most significant are the 339 from Dr. Samuel Arthur Jones, the 19 from H.G.O. Blake, and the 12 from Henry S. Salt.

CUMMINGS DAVIS'S STARS TO WALDEN by Henry W. Rolfe

(Editor's Note: By a strange coincidence, the following paper came to hand just in time to act as a footnote to the commentary on Alfred Hosmer. "The stained piece of paper" will be found described on p. 2 of the Hosmer catalog.)

"You can Follow these Lower Stars to where Henry D. Thoreau's Cabin was where are a pile of stones.

"And Follow the higher Stars where you can Find Him above in Glory

C. E. Davis."

Alfred Hosmer showed me about 1890 a stained piece of paper on which the words above were written. This copy is correct verbatim et litteratim, Alfred Hosmer found the paper at the foot of a large pine tree near Walden's shore. The seeker after Thoreau's hut site leaves the highway, follows a wood road through scrub oaks, then turns sharply and threads by a very dim path down a gentle slope. It used to be hard to locate the beginning of the path among the pines. C. E. Davis was a Thoreau enthusiast who wished to guide the pilgrim. He went to a tinman and had a score or so of tin stars cut, five-pointed, with a nail-hole in the center. To each of the two pines marking the beginning of the path he nailed a star some fifteen feet up. A little farther along he

marked with a star a right-hand tree. Then a left-hand. And so on. Then he fastened to one of those first pines the paper that Alfred Hosmer later found. The stars soon rusted golden brown and were hard to see against the trees. Probably many of them are there now. . . .

Davis was a mouse of a man. He wore cloth booties with elastic sides, the kind that rheumatic ladies used to be comfortable in. "Little Davis" he was called. He had a little income. With it he bought beautiful old American furniture. After a time, the Antiquarian Society made some arrangement with him and put his furniture into an old Concord house and him with it as caretaker. It is now the chief glory of their new building. . . .

Alfred Hosmer "clerked it" in Brown's dry goods store on the Mill Dam at Concord. He was a silent person who went quietly about in sneakers. European biographers of Thoreau turned up in Brown's to learn from him. He spent much or all of his leisure time in reading Thoreau and hunting up every spot, plant, bird, quadruped, phenomenon that Thoreau mentioned. He said he had found Thoreau in error once or twice. Thoreau said the hepatica did not grow in Concord, but it did. Go down the Lincoln road about six miles; take the turn to the right; after a certain specified distance turn into the woods on the right; find a certain hollow; there were the hepaticas, just inside the Concord-Lincoln line.

(Editor's Note: And now if I may add a footnote to a footnote: Word has just come from Concord that Alfred Hosmer's botanical checklists and notes have been presented to the Concord Free Public Library and his herbarium to the New England Botanical Club by Herbert Hosmer, where they will be of aid to students of Thoreau's botany as well as Concord's).

THOREAU AND THE CONCORD LYCEUM . . . by Walter Harding

The Concord Lyceum was one of the most active and most prominent in the entire country. It was established by Josiah Holbrook, the founder of the American lyceum movement, on January 7, 1829, with fifty-seven charter members. In the course of the next half-century, it held 784 lectures, 105 debates, and 14 concerts. Emerson delivered an even one hundred of these lectures, and Thoreau nineteen.

How early Thoreau joined the Concord lyceum is not known. Dr. Canby thinks that he joined when he was twelve. Since his parents, particularly his mother, were keenly interested in the intellectual affairs of the day, it is probable that he attended meetings at least occasionally from the time the lyceum was established in 1829, when he was eleven, until he left Concord to attend college in Cambridge four years later. That it was a common practice for the youth of the village to attend is evidenced by the fact that a committee, varying in number from three to six, had to be appointed annually "to regulate the behaviour of the boys."

It is interesting to note that Thoreau's brother, John, was active in the Concord Lyceum. Although he never held office nor delivered a lecture before the group, he apparently attended the meetings regularly and often took part in the debates. He undoubtedly did much to arouse Henry's interest in the organization and to keep him informed of its activities while he was away at college.

Thoreau took an active part in the Concord Lyceum almost as soon as he returned to the village after graduating from Harvard in the summer of 1837. By October 18th of the next year, he had sufficiently evidenced his interest in the organization to be elected secretary, an office which he held until December 15, 1840. Only three weeks after being elected secretary, he was also elected curator of the lyceum. In the fall of 1840, he declined election to both offices, but, on November 18, 1842, he was elected curator once again over his own protest and held office for the following season. On March 5, 1845, when two curators resigned in protest of an invitation extended to Wendell Phillips to lecture against slavery, Thoreau, Emerson, and Samuel Barrett were chosen to fill the vacancies. On November 2, 1853, Thoreau was again elected curator, but declined. It is evident, thus, that he took an

active interest not only in speaking before the lyceum, but also in its general maintenance.

Of the two offices in the lyceum which Thoreau held, that of curator was by far the most important. The secretary apparently merely recorded the minutes of the meetings and, for the Concord Lyceum at least, these were very brief. Rarely did they record more than the date, the speaker, and the subject for each meeting. Occasionally the secretary contented himself with merely listing the speakers for an entire season. The curators, on the other hand, were "the general agents to do any business for the Society under their direction." They prepared the winter's program, obtained the lecturers, and provided a heated and lighted hall to hear them in.

That Thoreau was far more than a routine curator is obvious from an examination of the manuscript records of the Concord Lyceum. For the winter of 1842-1843, he provided the following speakers: Emerson (three times), George Bancroft, Theodore Parker, Horace Greeley, O.A. Brownson, Dr. Charles T. Jackson, Henry Giles, Dr. E. H. Chapin, Dr. Edward Jarvis, James Freeman Clarke, Thoreau himself, Wendell Phillips, James Richardson, Charles Lane, S.W. Bull, and half a dozen lesser known men.

To provide this list of speakers, Thoreau received \$109.20. He paid \$31.25 for renting, lighting, and heating a lecture hall. He paid Bancroft, Brownson, Giles, and Jackson ten dollars each. He paid Chapin eight dollars and Parker three. The remaining speakers spoke without fee. At the end of the season, he was able to turn \$9.20 back into the treasury, thus having spent exactly one hundred dollars. At a very conservative estimate, a similar program of speakers today would probably cost at least twenty times as much. There is little wonder then that Thoreau recorded in his Journal that year:

How much might be done for a town with \$100: I myself have provided a select course of twenty-five lectures for a winter, together with room, fuel, and lights, for that sum,--which was no inconsiderable benefit to every inhabitant.

Thoreau continued his interest in the welfare of the lyceum throughout his life, long after he ceased to serve as an official of the society. His Journals have many commendations of the value of the lyceum in village life, and even in his masterwork, WALDEN, he finds place to say:

The one hundred and twenty-five dollars annually subscribed for a lyceum in the winter is better spent than any other equal sum raised in the town. . . New England can hire all the wise men in the world to come and teach her.

It is little to be wondered then, with his life-long interest in his local lyceum, that Thoreau turned to the lyceum platform as a means of supplementing his tiny income. His mentor, Ralph Waldo Emerson, was one of the first professional lecturers and by the mid-forties was earning a sizable income through his lecture tours. Greeley, Ellery Channing, Orestes Brownson, and Thoreau's Harvard classmates Richardson and Weiss all, at least occasionally took to the lecture platform. Then, too, his own lyceum, even though it paid him nothing, offered him an opportunity to obtain the necessary practice for speaking before a group of people and holding their attention. It is noteworthy that he spoke before his own neighbors for a number of years before he ventured forth to any other lyceum. His first outside engagement was arranged by Nathaniel Hawthorne who, in all probability, first heard him speak before the Concord Lyceum when he himself was a resident of the town.

To Thoreau's way of thinking, lecturing was probably an ideal occupation. It gave a broad margin of leisure to his life. With on a good engagement, he could make more money than he could in weeks of surveying or pencil-making. Twenty-five or fifty dollars would provide for many days for a man who believed in the simple life. Too, it offered him an opportunity to do missionary work. Thoreau had a message to deliver to his fellowman, and he persisted in delivering it even though his audiences preferred to listen to his humorous work and his nature writings.

Too, the lecture platform provided an ideal proving-ground for his writing. For the major part of his adult life, Thoreau considered himself pri-

marily as an author. His neighbor, Emerson, who achieved far greater success as a literary figure in his lifetime than did Thoreau, read nearly every sentence to a lyceum audience before putting it into print. Not only did it enable him to discover what he had written well and what should be further polished, but it created a market for his books when they eventually reached the stalls. What could be more natural than that Thoreau too quickly turned to the lecture platform?

In his later life, Thoreau wrote many fulminations against lecturing. But most of these can be taken with the proverbial grain of salt. The majority of the complaints are that he has not been hired to speak more frequently. Most of the rest are that the audience seemed unable to understand what he was trying to say. But rare was the occasion when he turned down an opportunity to lecture. As long as his health permitted, he spoke whenever the occasion offered.

(Note: The above is a condensation of one chapter of a master's thesis at the University of North Carolina, entitled "The Lectures of Henry David Thoreau." Other chapters have been published elsewhere.)

NOTES AND QUERIES . . .

. . . HAWKS ALOFT! THE STORY OF HAWK MOUNTAIN by Maurice Broun (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1949) contains frequent mention of Thoreau. Profits from the book help support the Hawk Mt. Sanctuary. . . . Martin Wolfson, in a letter to the NEW YORK TELEGRAM (Oct. 31, '49) suggests that Thoreau's "Civil Disobedience" might be too subversive for use in our high schools.

. . . WALDEN has been chosen as one of the 20 great works of American literature to be represented in the new UNESCO world classics. . . Kenneth Roberts refers frequently to Thoreau in his new I WANTED TO WRITE (New York: Doubleday, 1949). . . The model of the Walden cabin built by Edmund Collette and displayed at the Concord Antiquarian Society last summer, is now at the Concord Public Library. . . . Princeton University is currently conducting an exhibition of Thoreau first editions in its library.

. . . Mr. H. Vail Deale of Drake University, Des Moines, Iowa, is making a study of the social concepts of Thoreau as evidenced in his Journals. . . Can anyone give any specific details of the tale that when an Italian newspaper in New York attempted to print "Civil Disobedience" translated into Italian, the issue was destroyed by the police as subversive? It supposedly happened about 1930 or 1931. . . . The Thoreau herbarium described in the October bulletin has now been completely mounted under protective sheets by Mrs. Wheeler and is to be deposited in the Concord Free Public Library. It will be on display at the annual meeting next July. . . . Dr. Ralph E. Bailey of the Milwaukee, Wisc. Unitarian Church, preached a December sermon on "Thoreau and Other Observers."

THE ROWSE CRAYON OF THOREAU

Elsewhere in this bulletin we have spoken at length on the treasures in the Thoreau Library of Alfred W. Hosmer. Here is one brief sample of the little odds and ends of information that turn up in its files--odds and ends that do much to humanize Henry Thoreau. It is a portion of a letter written to Alfred Hosmer in reply to a question from him:

Nautical Almanac Office
U.S. Observatory
Georgetown Heights, D.C.
June 13th 1896

Mr. Alfred W. Hosmer
Dear Sir:--

I have just received your letter of June 10th. Give one credit mark to Mr. Sanborn! He is actually correct in assigning 1854 as the date of Rowse's crayon of Henry Thoreau. Mrs. Thoreau invited Mrs. Loomis and myself

to spend the summer of 1854 with her at Concord, and when Rowse came, Mrs. Thoreau invited him to stay at her house while he was studying Henry's face.

I was very much interested in watching him while he was watching the Expression of Henry's face. For two or three weeks he did not put a pencil to paper; but one morning at breakfast, he suddenly jumped up from the table, asked to be excused and disappeared for the rest of the day. The next morning he brought down the crayon, almost exactly in its present form, scarcely another touch was put upon it.

It is for me, on the whole, the most satisfactory likeness, for it represents Henry just as he was in that summer, so memorable to me, memorable for my intimacy with Henry. . . .

Very sincerely yours
Eben J. Loomis

The Rowse crayon is now in the Concord Free Public Library. Below is an engraved representation of it.



ADDITIONS TO THE THOREAU BIBLIOGRAPHYWH

Canby, Henry Seidel. "Thoreau: A New Estimate." SAT.REV.OF LIT., XXXII (Dec. 3, 1949), 15-6. Thoreau as seen through his journals. Slightly changed, this was used as the foreword to the new edition of T's JOURNALS.

Carson, Gerald. "Cape Cod Revisited." NEW YORK TIMES MAGAZINE. Oct. 9, 1949. pp.39-41. Humorous commemoration of centennial of T's 1st visit to Cape Cod.

Combella, C.R.B. "Two Critics of Society." PACIFIC SPECTATOR, III (Autumn, 1949), 440-5. A comparison and contrast of the lives and philosophies of T. and Marx.

Cook, R.L. PASSAGE TO WALDEN. Reviews: R.M., YANKEE, Oct. '49, 89-94; George Whicher, NEW ENGLAND QUARTERLY, XXII (Jan '50), 542-3.

Dodge, Norman L. "Aunt Maria's Own Copy." MONTH AT GOODSPED'S BOOK SHOP, XXI (Nov'49), 34-6. Maria Thoreau's copy of A WEEK offered for sale at \$500. Photograph of volume and lengthy commentary.

Eulau, Heinz. "Wayside Challenger--Some Remarks on the Politics of Henry David Thoreau." ANTI-POCH REVIEW, IX (Winter '49), 509-22. A provocative discussion of T's changing attitude towards government.

(Hooper, Glauys). THE THOREAU LIBRARY OF ALFRED W. HOSMER GIVEN TO THE CONCORD FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY BY HERBERT BUTTRICK HOSMER. Concord, 1949. 24pp. Mimeographed. See p.1 of this bulletin.

Krutch, J.W. HENRY DAVID THOREAU. Reviews. F.H. Allen, BULLETIN OF MASS. AUDUBON SOC., XXXIII (Nov'49), 298-300; Sterling Lanier, NEW ENGLAND QUARTERLY, XXII (Jan'50), 540-2.

"A Little Fishy Friend." NATION, CLXIX (Oct.8'49), 350-1. Commemorating centennial of A WEEK. T.began new epoch in nature writing because he was willing to regard objects of

nature as his fellow-creatures without qualification or condensation. R.A.

Paludan, Jacob. OM THOREAU. Copenhagen, Denmark: Kunst Og Kultur, 1949. 8pp. A reprint of the foreword to the new Danish edition of WALDEN.

Paul, Sherman. "The Wise Silence: Sound as the Agency of Correspondence in Thoreau." NEW ENGLAND QUARTERLY, XXII (Jan'50), 511-27. Lengthy discussion of T's sense of sound.

Peabody Institute Library. MR. EMERSON LECTURES AT THE PEABODY INSTITUTE. Baltimore, 1949. 19pp. Emerson and Burroughs discuss T. A beautifully printed pamphlet.

PERTH AMBOY (N.J.) EVENING NEWS. "Eagleswood, a Local Social Experiment, Attracted Literary Giants of the 1800s." Nov.12'49. Illustrated account of the community which Thoreau visited and surveyed. The most detailed account of this experiment yet to appear.

Seven Gables Bookshop. HAWTHORNE AND THOREAU. New York, 1949. 10pp. A catalog of books pertaining to Hawthorne and to Thoreau.

Thomas, W. Stephen. "Marti and Thoreau: Pioneers of Personal Freedom." DOS PUEBLOS (Havana, Cuba), Aug'49, pp.1-3. Comparison of T. and the Cuban revolutionary. Influence of T. on Marti.

Thoreau, Henry David. THE JOURNALS OF THOREAU. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1949. 14vols. \$56.00. Now at last Thoreau's Journals are once again in print in their entirety. This is a re-issue of the Journal volumes from the 20-volume Walden Edition of 1906, with a new foreword by Henry Seidel Canby. No longer need we search the bookstores in vain for these volumes. I don't know the publishing plans of Houghton Mifflin, whether or not they intend to keep these in stock. But I would suggest that you get them before they go out of print once again. These volumes are indispensable to any real student of Thoreau.

"Resistance to Civil Government." FREEDOM (London, Eng.), X (Oct. 1'49), 2. A condensation of "Civil Disobedience."

WALDEN or, LIFE IN THE WOODS. New York: New American Library, 1949. 221pp. Signet Book 747. A 25¢ reprint, handy for use in literature courses. Good but brief introduction.

The Same. (WALDEN; LIVET I SKOVENE.) Kobenhavn: Kunst og Kultur, 1949. 405pp. Translated into the Danish by Ole Jacobsen; forward by Jacob Paludan; illustrated by Mads Stage. Knowing no Danish, I cannot evaluate this translation. But I can vouch for the fact that it is one of the most beautifully illustrated editions of WALDEN that I have ever seen. It puts our American editions to shame. Many of you will want to own it for the illustrations alone. Incidentally, this is the first appearance of WALDEN in Danish. It is also in Swedish, Czech, Russian, German, Dutch, French, Italian, Japanese, Spanish, and Braille. Have we missed any?

Wang, Li. M.A. "The Orient in Henry David Thoreau." ABSTRACTS OF MASTERS' THESES. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University, 1949. p.43. "The results of this study reveal that the mystical elements in Thoreau were strongly influenced by Oriental philosophy, and that Thoreau took, not only figures and sentences, but ideas as well, from his Oriental reading." (R.A.)

We are indebted to R.Adams, F.Allen, T.Bailey, F.Babcock, M.Brown, W.Conant, C.Hoagland, G.Hosmer, N.Lehrman, R.Kirk, P.Oehser, P.Sargent, E.Teale, S.Thomas, R.Wheeler, and W.Whites for information used in this bulletin. Keep the editor informed of new Thoreauiana and items he has missed.

The Thoreau Society is an informal organization of several hundred students and followers of the life and works of Henry David Thoreau. Membership is open to anyone interested. Fees are one dollar a year; life membership, twenty-five dollars. This bulletin is issued quarterly by the secretary. All material, unless otherwise assigned, is compiled and written by the secretary.

The officers of the society are Raymond Adams, Chapel Hill, N.C., president; Mrs. Caleb Wheeler, Concord, Mass., vice-president; and secretary-treasurer: Walter Harding, English Department, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, N.J.